



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT AND TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS

June 15, 2009

Ms. Sydnee Dickson, Director
Educator Quality and Licensing
Utah State Office of Education
250 E. 500 S.
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200

Dear Ms. Dickson:

On April 15, 2009, the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) submitted a response to the monitoring report that resulted from a program review conducted by the Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs office of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The program office team reviewed your State's progress in meeting the highly qualified teacher provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and your State's administration of the ESEA Title II, Part A Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program. Thank you for sending this response to the monitoring report.

This response, in combination with additional information submitted on December 19, May 31, and June 5, satisfactorily addresses the findings identified in the monitoring report. In particular, USOE has eliminated use of the Praxis 0511 to demonstrate subject matter competence for secondary multi-subject teachers. It has notified districts and relevant parties about this change and the fact that secondary teachers who had relied on that test must demonstrate subject matter competence through another means. USOE has also drafted a HOUSSE rubric, known as the Framework, for both secondary multi-subject special education teachers and for secondary multi-subject teachers in necessarily existing small schools (NESS), and the agency will post the final Frameworks for both groups of teachers on the USOE website by June 30, 2009.

The agency has also modified its highly qualified teacher regulations (R277-510) to reflect the fact that the state no longer uses a HOUSSE process except in the very limited circumstances described above. The USOE plans to amend these regulations further to bring them into full compliance with ESEA, and state practice, by March, 2010. By June 30, 2009, it also plans to post on the agency's official web site a clear and comprehensive description of the state's highly qualified teacher requirements, clarifying the variations that apply to new teachers compared with veteran teachers, elementary teachers compared with secondary teachers, special education teachers compared with general education teachers, and other important details.

USOE has also created a data quality plan to ensure the accuracy of the teacher quality data reported in the CSPR and the annual report cards. By June 30, 2009, USOE will rerun the data on the highly qualified status of the teachers who had previously taken Praxis 0511 to reflect the results of the HOUSSE procedure, subject matter testing, or other events that may have affected

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their status since the monitoring visit. USOE has provided assurances that its 2009 Consolidated Performance Report and its 2009 annual report card (reflecting the 2008-09 school year) will accurately reflect the highly qualified status of these teachers.

USOE is also redesigning both its state and LEA reports cards to ensure that they contain all information that ESEA requires concerning teacher quality. The ESEA-compliant report cards will be on the USOE website no later than January 15, 2010.

By June 30, 2009, USOE will institute a number of procedures to help Title I programs conform to the ESEA prohibition against hiring teachers who are not highly qualified and other requirements related to teacher quality. For example, principals in schools with Title I programs will be given access to the highly qualified teacher database so they have the tools to assess an applicant's highly qualified status during the recruitment process. The agency will also routinely monitor districts for compliance with these requirements during the course of district monitoring.

USOE has developed new procedures for monitoring LEAs. It will conduct site monitoring of each district once every three years. This monitoring will be done in conjunction with Title I monitoring. By June 30, 2009, it will develop and submit to the U.S. Department of Education its new monitoring tool.

USOE will send out a notice to LEAs concerning their obligation to measure and monitor the equitable distribution of teachers by June 30, 2009. It will also monitor LEAs concerning this obligation in the course of the new monitoring program. The USOE itself will measure and submit a report to the U.S. Department of Education on the progress it has made in reaching its equitable distribution goals by August 1, 2009. It will also include a report on progress made toward its equitable distribution goals in the annual State report card, beginning in January, 2010.

In February 2009, USOE sent all districts a memo clarifying their obligations to provide equitable services to private schools under Title II, Part A. In August 2009, it will notify private school representatives in the state that they are eligible to participate in state-level activities. USOE will issue this notice in August of every year with the expectation that services will actually be provided, based on the consultation that occurs following the August notice, on an on-going basis throughout each school year.

The Department will follow up with USOE to ensure that progress is being made on these issues and that all agreed upon deadlines are met.

During the State agency for higher education (SAHE) portion of the monitoring review, the program team determined the SAHE was in full compliance with Title II, Part A of the ESEA except in failing to use the most recent Census data to identify "high need" LEAs to determine program eligibility. Despite this error, the SAHE had not awarded subgrants to ineligible LEAs. It has provided assurances that it will use the correct Census data in all future subgrant competitions.

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We commend your excellent work in responding to the concerns raised by the monitoring report. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to ensure that all teachers meet the highly qualified requirements and to help improve the delivery of ESEA Title II, Part A services in Washington.

Sincerely,



Michelle Meier
Program Officer

cc: Teddi Safman

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